

# News From the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division

## *Wyoming Department of Health*

December 2008



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## **Wyoming Communities and Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services Division: A Partnership that Works!**

One of the highest priorities of the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division is to partner with Wyoming communities to work together to meet the challenges of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drug abuse. Our Mission

Statement says, "Substance abuse and mental health are issues confronting communities, e.g. schools, the work place, neighborhoods, places where people worship, have fun and live. Our role is to encourage and empower communities to meet the needs as they see it

in their own communities."

While we have a lot of work to do, there is good news. The partnership between the state and the local community leaders is working!

*Continued on pg 2*

## **Public Hearing on Discrimination**

One of the greatest barriers to successful treatment and recovery of persons with mental illness is discrimination. Those with mental illness encounter discrimination in education, housing, employment, courts and even in treatment. The Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Services Division is joining with UPLIFT and the Wyoming Citizens Review Panel to shine a light on this issue.

On December 3rd, we will co-sponsor a "Public Hearing on Discrimination Against Persons with Mental Illness." This

hearing will take place in the Cottonwood Room of the Laramie County Library between 1 and 4pm. The public is invited to attend and listen or participate by telling your own story. State agency leaders and a representative of the Governor's Office will be present to listen to concerns.

Lifetime meth use among high school students (in Wyoming) has dropped by more than 50%.

## A Working Partnership

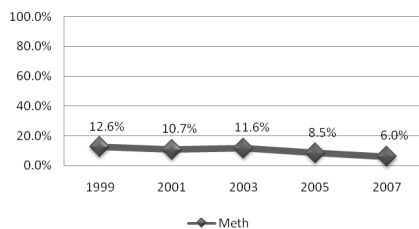
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These graphs of data show the trend lines all pointing in the right direction, i.e. downward, when showing the progress of prevention efforts throughout the state to reduce youth drug, alcohol and tobacco use.

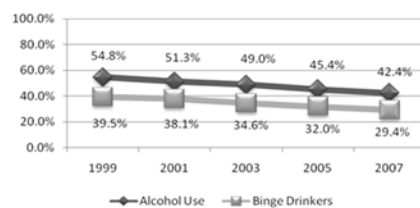
Over the last decade, Wyoming has made significant progress in reducing youth use of meth, alcohol, binge drinking and tobacco initiation. Since 1999, the resources the legislature and others have invested in prevention has given Wyoming a huge *ROI*

-“return on investment.” Lifetime meth use among high school students has dropped by more than 50%. Alcohol use rates have declined by more than 22% during that time and dangerous binge drinking among high school students is down 26%.

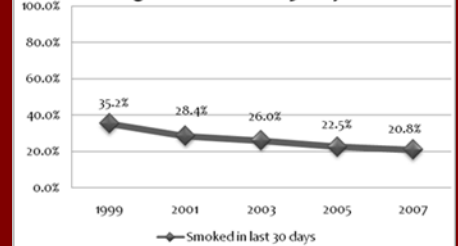
**Lifetime Meth Use Among High School Students**



**30-day Alcohol Use vs. Binge Drinking Among High School Students**



**High School Students who Smoked Cigarettes in the last 30 days**



**Website Improves Access To Resources: [www.wyocare.org](http://www.wyocare.org)**



Wyoming Chemical Abuse Research Education Program is a prevention, education and treatment oriented program aimed at providing free educational and prevention resources as well as training opportunities to citizens throughout Wyoming to support healthy living and healthy communities. During the past six months, WyoCARE has made multiple changes aimed at providing enhanced consumer access to resources. The major focus of this change has been the development of a new state of the art website.

The website has a majority of resources in PDF format where you can download and see the item you are ordering.

The ease to review and order materials will hopefully enhance access to resources.

You may search the website by type of media, topic or consumer type. For example, if you are a parent looking for resources to talk with your kids, you can log on and find resources under parent as consumer type or you may wish to search for a specific topic like kids and alcohol. This website is aimed at

multiple types of consumers such as educators, prevention and treatment professionals, parents, kids, and criminal justice professionals, just to name a few.

Log on and check out the new



resources. It is a free way to support healthy living for Wyoming citizens and communities. If you have any questions about the website, feel free to e-mail

us, take the online survey or give us a call at 307-766-4119.

WyoCARE – Wyoming Chemical Abuse Research and Education program is coordinated through the Counselor Education Department at the University of Wyoming. WyoCARE is funded by grants from the Wyoming Department of Health, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division and the Wyoming Attorney General's Office, Division of Victim Services.

*Karen Robertson, NCC, DCC, LPC is the Director of WyoCARE*  
[wyocare@uwyo.edu](mailto:wyocare@uwyo.edu) or  
 307-766-2861

## Culture Influences Excessive Drinking

Culture plays a bigger role in how young people view drinking than age or gender, finds new research from the [International Center for Alcohol Policies](#). The Center conducted focus groups with youth of legal drinking age in seven countries chosen for their diverse drinking patterns: Brazil, China, Italy, Nigeria, Russia, South Africa, and Scotland. Common patterns across the countries include drinking as a means to socialize with higher consumption on pay days and when alcohol is cheap or free. Respondents from the Nigerian,



Russian, Scottish and South African groups reported that excessive drinking was often part of socializing, whereas the Italian and Brazilian groups reported that their socializing with peers did not often feature drinking to excess. Results were part of a book, *Swimming with Crocodiles: The Culture of Extreme Drinking*, which in addition to focus group results includes recommendations for reducing excessive drinking.



For more, go to <http://www.icap.org/>

## Is Secondhand Smoke Killing Your Pets???



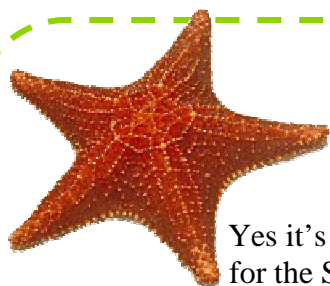
- Dogs that are exposed to secondhand smoke are three times more likely to develop lung or nasal cancer.
- Dogs can experience allergic reactions to secondhand smoke. Often confused with fleas or food allergies as dogs will scratch, bite and chew skin.
- Any form of tobacco, if ingested, can cause death or illness in a relatively short amount of time.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has classified secondhand smoke as a known cause of cancer or "Group A carcinogen."

Do you need a reason to quit smoking?  
Look no further than the pets who share your home.

**1-800-QUIT-NOW**  
Or  
**1-800-784-8669**

## AND THE WINNER IS.....



Yes it's time again for the STARFISH AWARDS!!! This year's event will be held on January 15, 2009 at 6 p.m. at the Little America in Cheyenne. There were 10 nomination categories open for individuals and groups:

- Person in recovery from substance abuse.
- Person in recovery from a mental health disorder.
- A substance abuse, mental health treatment, and/or prevention advocate.
- A public servant, which may include an elected or appointed official, judge, legislator or other public official.
- A substance abuse, mental health treatment, and/or prevention program.
- A community coalition.
- A substance abuse therapist.
- A mental health therapist.
- A Wyoming youth, youth group,

school, class, or individual under the age of 25 years advocating or supporting recovery.

- A Wyoming family or parents who are in recovery.

The Division received over 50 nominations and is in the process of gathering a committee to determine the winners. It will be a tough job with so many wonderful nominees.

BUT WAIT... there's more...on January 15 and 16<sup>th</sup> there will be opportunities for free training... including a half day of board training by ALIGN, Surrounded by Recovery, NIATx, and a Questions and Answer session with the State Agency Heads. Registration forms will be in the mail and on the website soon. Check the website for more information or contact the Division at (800) 535-4006 <http://wdh.state.wy.us/mhsa/initiatives/starfish.html>



## Wyoming Drug Courts Return on Investment

In a 2007 report on Wyoming's drug courts, the National Center on State Courts concluded, "The State of Wyoming should be commended for its foresight in adopting a series of statewide performance measures for its adult, juvenile and family drug courts. This effort places Wyoming on the leading edge of drug courts nationally."

The ability to collect outcome data should also provide comfort to legislators and others that the 4.5 million dollar annual investment on drug courts is paying off. Drug courts are the most researched sentencing alternative used by courts throughout the country. The National Association of Drug Court professionals (of which Wyoming is a member) found "well administered drug courts reduce crime rates by as much as 35 percent." They do that by using a balance between "carrots and sticks" to retain offenders in treatment programs

long enough for the treatment to work. Drug courts keep communities safe by intensively supervising the participants and testing them frequently to assure they are not using alcohol and other drugs.

"The state of Wyoming and its citizens have benefited from a history of support for its Drug Court Program."

Wyoming specific data show success. In FY07-08, 87% of the drug court participants experienced no arrests or other legal violations following their admission to a program. Fewer than 3% of the adult participants tested positive for drug use and those in adult drug courts averaged 284 continuous days without using.

Perhaps the most telling data indicating success are comparative costs. In the fiscal

year ending September 30, 2008, Wyoming drug courts served 778 offenders at a cost of approximately 4.5 million dollars. The cost, including all administrative costs, is \$15.85 per day per participant. The cost of incarcerating an offender at the Wyoming State Penitentiary is \$146.66 per day. An inmate at the Laramie County jail will cost taxpayers \$83.58 each day.

If you have never visited a drug court, please do so. Attend a graduation ceremony and hear the stories behind the data. Drug courts work and are changing the lives of Wyoming citizens while making communities safer and saving tax dollars. Perhaps that is why the National Center for State Courts study of the Wyoming drug court program concluded, "The state of Wyoming and its citizens have benefited from a history of support for its Drug Court Program."

# Evidence Based Smokefree Environmental Strategies Could Make a Difference in Wyoming

Since 2006, according to the Surgeon General, there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke. A report by the Surgeon General found that secondhand smoke has immediate adverse effects on the cardiovascular system and causes coronary heart disease and lung cancer.

The Center for Disease Control (2007) reports, “research has documented the effectiveness of laws and policies in a comprehensive tobacco control effort to protect the public from secondhand smoke exposure, promote cessation, and prevent initiation, including increasing

the unit price of tobacco products and implementing smoking bans through policies, regulations, and laws...” Secondhand smoke policies save lives, reduce youth tobacco use, and increase tobacco cessation.

A recent report from the University of Wyoming’s WYSAC reports “to reduce the public health threat of secondhand smoke, laws to establish and protect smokefree environments are becoming common across the United States.” Nearly half of all workplaces—including bars-- and 62% of restaurants are protected from secondhand smoke exposure

through state or local laws. Nationwide, 36 of the 50 states, and the District of Columbia, have laws enforcing smokefree workplaces and/or bars and/or restaurants. The city of Laramie enacted smokefree ordinances in 2005 and has since seen improving health of citizens and prevention of initiation.

To learn more about the advantages of a smokefree environment, please visit <http://health.wyo.gov/Media.aspx?mediaId=5330>

<http://health.wyo.gov/Media.aspx?mediaId=5330>



**Through With Chew Week**

**February 15-21, 2009**

**Great American Spit Out**

**February 19, 2009**

QUIT FOR A DAY OR QUIT FOR GOOD • QUIT FOR A DAY OR QUIT FOR GOOD

## Site Visits Begin

The Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division began the process of conducting site visits with twenty-four state-funded Mental Health and Substance Abuse treatment providers throughout Wyoming. This process is an important component of the Quality Management Program.

The primary focus of these on-site reviews is to examine contract compliance; however, the visits also serve to create a relationship with each provider. It is important to the Division to learn more about each program. Upon completion of each site visit, a written report is compiled, highlighting the strengths and limitations found during the visit. This report helps

to facilitate open dialogue between each provider and the MHSASD in the spirit of shared interest in enhancing mental health and substance abuse treatment options in Wyoming. To date, five site visits have been completed, and it is projected that the remaining site visits will be completed by the end of March 2009.

# Why SBIRT is Right for Wyoming

There is a huge, troubling gap between those who really need treatment and those who get it. You might think that is because of the lack of treatment capacity and long wait lists. Not so. Of those who need treatment, less than 2% actually seek it. The real gap is that more than 95% of those who need treatment don't realize they need it...in other words "they don't know what they don't know."

Many times these are young people who may have grown up in homes where excessive use of alcohol and the abuse of illicit drugs were role modeled. They learned that drinking a six pack a night was "normal" behavior. SBIRT is designed as an early intervention to motivate these folks by educating them on the health consequences of their choices.

SBIRT is an acronym for "screening, brief intervention, referral and treatment." The idea is to provide SBIRT at those places high risk users go for other health or human services before they seek treatment, e.g. public health and free medical clinics, primary care physicians and emergency rooms. These health care professionals frequently treat people who have substance use disorders, seeing them earlier than a criminal court encounter that results in court ordered treatment.

SBIRT begins with a brief 4-8 question survey that can be administered by a nurse or other trained person. If the screening raises red flags, the person is offered educational services

intended to inform him or her about the health consequences of risky alcohol or drug use. The research demonstrates that this simple, low cost strategy results in a significant reduction in the use of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs because the person is learning, perhaps for the first time, that their health is at risk. If a person needs or requests treatment, they are referred to a licensed and certified treatment provider.

**OUTCOMES:** In New Mexico 32 controlled studies have concluded SBIRT is more effective in reducing drug and alcohol use than more expensive, less available long-term treatment. In Washington State the use of SBIRT has resulted in millions of dollars in savings among Medicaid patients. Among SBIRT programs collectively, there has been a documented 38% reduction in those who drink to the point of intoxication by simply screening and educating. In hospital emergency rooms, as many as 50-70% of the patients are under the influence and SBIRT has been found to reduce the numbers of DUI's among this population by nearly 10%.

The SBIRT outcomes are so

good that Center for Medicaid and Medicare (CMS), which usually adopts policies to reduce claims, has encouraged states to open up claim codes to encourage doctors, hospitals and others to use SBIRT and to pay them for doing so. A growing number of commercial insurance companies have followed this lead.

The Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division has begun to implement SBIRT in a number of public health offices and intends to promote this early intervention across the state. If you

questions please call  
Marilyn Patton at  
(307) 777-7071 or  
(800) 535-4006.



## Wyoming Photovoice Moves Worlds

An innovative Wyoming program is providing a platform for children with mental health issues and their families to share their stories, experiences and concerns through the use of photographs and personal narratives.

The Wyoming SAGE (Support, Access, Growth and Empowerment) Photovoice Project is an advocacy research and education component of the Wyoming SAGE System of Care. The multi-step process combines equal parts photography, research, group processing, and storytelling and social action; and develops awareness of personal and community issues. The project allows consumers of mental health services to express what their experiences have been like in the mental health system.

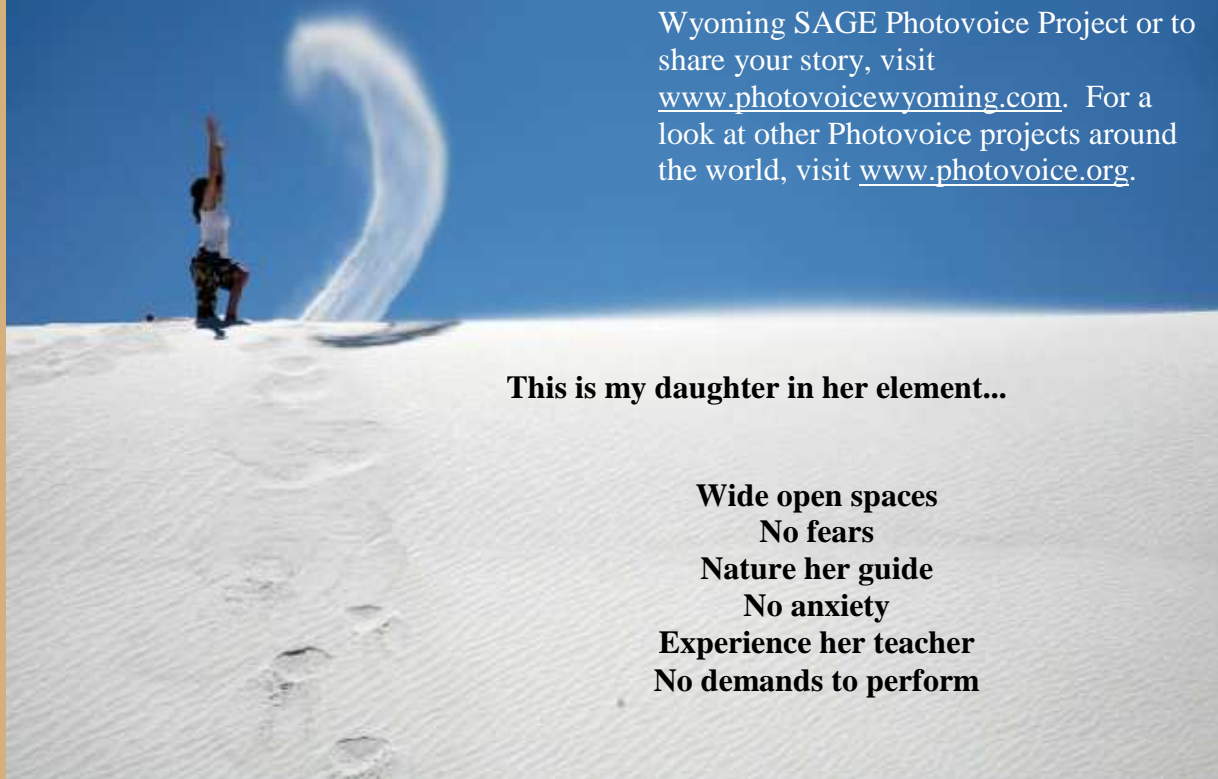
The exhibit, "Photovoice Giving Voice to Youth and Families with Mental Health Needs," has been viewed throughout the state at local coffee

houses, the University of Wyoming, and at legislative receptions. For lawmakers, the hope is to ensure that they understand the mental health needs of state's consumers when they make their budget and legislative decisions, said Becker, Photovoice Project Director.

The Photovoice images and stories have also been included in an annual calendar that was distributed among lawmakers throughout the state. To date, more than 80 individuals have participated in the Wyoming SAGE Photovoice project.

"SAGE is designed for seriously emotionally disturbed children and for their families, many of whom have co-occurring problems," said Carolyn Paseneaux, resource director for SAGE. Some of the children are in residential homes and in the juvenile justice system or have been through these state run systems, she said.

For more information about the Wyoming SAGE Photovoice Project or to share your story, visit [www.photovoicewyoming.com](http://www.photovoicewyoming.com). For a look at other Photovoice projects around the world, visit [www.photovoice.org](http://www.photovoice.org).



**This is my daughter in her element...**

**Wide open spaces  
No fears  
Nature her guide  
No anxiety  
Experience her teacher  
No demands to perform**

«Title» «First Name» «Last Name»  
«Address Line 1»  
«City», «State» «ZIP Code»

Wyoming Department of Health  
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division  
6101 Yellowstone Road, Suite 220  
Cheyenne, WY 82002



## News Years is just around the corner..... Perfect time to make a positive change in your life.

Are you tired of paying between \$150.00 to \$300.00 a month for your tobacco habit?  
of coughing until your throat is sore?  
standing in the snow to smoke?  
seeing empty drinking bottles with used tobacco in them?  
not getting kissed under the mistletoe?

If you have answered yes to even one of these questions, let the Wyoming Quitline help you make 2009 a healthier year. Start by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW to enroll and receive help with your tobacco cessation efforts. The Wyoming Quitline financially assists with three full months of all FDA approved tobacco cessation medications to aid in your quit attempt. Just let us know which one you would like to use and we will get you all set up.

Let the Wyoming Quitline assist you in a New Year's resolution you can accomplish!

Remember **1-800-Quit-Now or 1-800-784-8669**. Or if you want only support and information on tobacco cessation go on line to **wy.quitnet.com**.

Happy Holidays from the staff at Wyoming Quitline.

